

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Shenandoah County is located on Interstate 81 in the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia. The County is situated between the regional employment centers of Winchester to the north and Harrisonburg to the south. The County has long been an agricultural center for Virginia, ranked as the fifth largest agricultural producing county in the Commonwealth. Almost 40% of the County's land area is actively being farmed. Additionally, the County has been a part of the region's success in production-based businesses and logistics operations. The I-81 corridor is dotted with small and mid-sized manufacturing facilities, warehouses, and distribution centers.

Recent economic shifts created a development anomaly for the County, as the aggressive real estate rush of the late 1990s and early 2000s had Shenandoah County experience substantial residential speculation, particularly for households seeking a more pastoral lifestyle while working in the Northern Virginia marketplace. Substantial new housing projects were started, primarily in Strasburg, Woodstock, and the portions of northern Shenandoah County. The National Recession impacted Shenandoah County similarly to the rest of the country, but also brought this exurban development activity to a stop.

While the County has had an economic chapter as part of its Comprehensive Plan, it had not developed a Strategic Economic Development Plan (SEDP) until 2013. This initial SEDP laid the foundation for the economic development vision and goals for the County. In 2018, the County's Tourism and Economic Development Department sought to contract an update to this plan, addressing any changes in the marketplace and refining the goals and vision for the County's economic development efforts through a stakeholder and elected official engagement process.

This report is the culmination of the work and input provided by the County's Board of Supervisors; the County's Tourism and Economic Development Department; the County's Office of Community Development; representatives from each of the County's six Towns (Edinburg, Mount Jackson, New Market, Strasburg, Toms Brook, and Woodstock), Fort Valley, and Basye; dozens of community stakeholders that were engaged through direct interviews and focus groups; and the SEDP Working Group assembled by the County to represent the various economic development interests in Shenandoah County. The affiliations of the individual members of the Working Group are listed to show the diversity of input that helped create the plan. This should not, however, be interpreted as an endorsement by the affiliate group's full constituents. The table on the following page show the members of the SEDP Working Group.

The intent of this updated Strategic Economic Development Plan is to provide the County, its municipalities, and current and prospective business residents with a detailed, action-oriented implementation plan that codifies the County's economic development vision and goals through achievable policy and investment recommendations. Ultimately, this SEDP document should provide guidance to the County Board of Supervisors and its Tourism and Economic Development Department to make informed, sound decisions on how to advance the County's economic and fiscal health over the next five to ten years.

## STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Name	Affiliation(s)
Aaron Bushong	Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce: Economic Development Council; Construction Industry
Blake Phillips	Shenandoah County Industrial Development Authority
Bobby Clark	Virginia Cooperative Extension
Brenda Black	Shenandoah County Tourism and Economic Development Department
Charles Aschmann	Fort Valley Resident; Home-Based Business
Dana Fisher	Farm Bureau
Dave Heimbach	ShenTel
Dennis Dysart	Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce: Economic Development Council; Financial Institution
Jacob Bowman	Agriculture - Local Farmer
Jay Langston	Shenandoah Valley Partnership
Jenna French	Shenandoah County Tourism and Economic Development Department
Jim Guisewhite	Commercial Real Estate Broker
Kary Haun	Shenandoah County Tourism and Economic Development Department
Keith Stephens	Shenandoah County Chamber of Commerce: Economic Development Council, Tourism & Hospitality Industry
Kim Woodwell	Local Resident, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
Kip Brannon	Industry Leader; Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board
Mandy Belyea	Town of Woodstock
Michelle Bixler	Town of Strasburg
Peggy Boston	Citizen's Advisory Group
Seth Coffman	Citizen's Advisory Group; Trout Unlimited
Todd Lynn	Shenandoah County Public Schools; Triplett Tech

The Strategic Economic Development Plan includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Executive Summary
- Chapter 2: Introduction
- Chapter 3: Socioeconomic Analysis
- Chapter 4: Real Estate Market Analysis
- Chapter 5: Agriculture Analysis
- Chapter 6: Site Analysis
- Chapter 7: Target Industry Analysis
- Chapter 8: Implementation Strategy